Covid-19 – Mass Formation or Mass Atrocity?

Mattias Desmet's theory of Mass Formation attracted a great deal of attention in 2022. In this review of Desmet's book, The Psychology of Totalitarianism, we argue that it manifests the psychology of atrocity – and that "Mass Formation" paradoxically serves to legitimize the mass atrocity perpetrated during the Covid-19 era.

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With the declaration of the pandemic that changed the world in March 2020, an army of thought police descended upon populations worldwide. Overnight, the public face of

science was transformed from a civil and civilian endeavor into a matter of law and order. In place of what had formerly emanated from research communities came edicts from government officials, bolstered by celebrity bureaucrats, enforced by censorship, smearing, and coercion, and backed up by riot squads (here, here, here, here, here, here, and here). In the process, science as previously known, a careful product of time, hypothesis-testing, collective critique, and pertinent subject matter expertise, gave way to The Science™, a kaleidoscopic, ever-changing and capricious set of pseudo-medical justifications for government overreach and violations of citizens' rights, riding on rolling waves of public messaging and manufactured fear, in keeping with a totalitarian model.

From the earliest days, there were those who could see these developments as dangerous, and those who could not. There were those who saw that the sharp turn away from democracy, due process, and human rights had nothing to do with empirical science whatsoever. And those who did not. The former have been mystified by the latter, and increasingly so as time has passed. *Why can't they see what's going on*?

For anyone who took seriously the entreaties to "follow the science", as early as March 17th, when authorities were claiming to both know next-to-nothing about the "novel" coronavirus and yet, inexplicably, to have also settled The Science™, John Ioannidis (Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology, Population Health, Biomedical Data Science and Statistics at Stanford University), wrote: "The data collected so far on how many people are infected and how the epidemic is evolving are utterly unreliable." He warned that while Covid-19 was being framed as a once-in-a-century pandemic, the science was shaping up to be a "once-in-a-century evidence fiasco" (Ioannidis, 2020).

Nevertheless, bureaucrats, government officials, tech moguls, social media personnel, and medical regulators studiously ignored Professor Ioannidis, a leading authority in his field, and proceeded, instead, to implement their "public health emergency", Lockstep-style, as had already been planned through a series of "pandemic preparedness" exercises (eg Alexopulos, 2018; Gates, 2015; Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, 2017, 2019; O'Toole, Mair & Inglesby, 2002; Rockefeller Foundation, 2010; Simpson et al., 2020; WHO, 2017a, 2017b). The underlying weaponization of medicine and science and their casting into tools of oppression were enabled from the outset by a blitzkrieg of tried and tested propaganda techniques, as we have summarized previously (Broudy & Kyrie, 2022; Kyrie & Broudy, 2022a, 2022b). In concert, consistent with psychological operations tactics (Dhami, 2011; GCHQ, 2014; Kyrie & Broudy, 2022a), the enactment of the "public health emergency" was carefully fabricated by numerous means, many policies with origins that predated the announcement of the pandemic (Ardizzone, 2021; Business Wire, 2021; Deevoy, 2021; Farber, 2020; Mercola, 2022a; Truth for Health, 2022; Vilet, 2022a; Yeadon, 2022). These foundational fabrications included systematically withholding life-saving treatment.

Dr Harvey Risch, MD and Professor Emeritus of Epidemiology at the Yale School of Public Health, whose work has been cited over 46,000 times, said of the FDA warning against Hydroxychloroquine:

> It's a fraud …. This was the crux of the whole pandemic in the first place. The suppression of Hydroxychloroquine started before anyone even knew there was a pandemic … in fall of 2019 … [based on a] completely false theory [that was] completely impossible …. This medication's been used in tens of billions of doses in hundreds of millions of people for half a century or more. It is one of the most important medications on the WHO list [and] one of the safest medications known.
>
> Had this medication been used at the outset of this pandemic it would have saved hundreds of thousands of lives that were needlessly lost because this was suppressed for a year …. And had we been able to treat this disease adequately the necessity of vaccines would not nearly have been as important, and maybe not important at all. And that is the crux of the whole pandemic. It was used to sell vaccines.

Exterior of the Pfizer World headquarter building, December 10, 2020, New York.

Several months into the manufactured pandemic, in June 2020, with contrary evidence and opinion from an increasingly long list of experts being sidelined, censored, erased, and ignored (Atlas, 2020; Bhattacharya & Packalen, 2020; Binder, 2022;

Gieseke, 2020; Lass, 2020; Leake, 2022; Rancourt, 2020; Reiss & Bhakdi, 2020; Shir-Raz, 2022; Vilet, 2022b), Professor Michael Levitt, biophysicist from the Department of Structural Biology in the School of Medicine at Stanford University, and recipient of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 2013, wrote:

> We let economics and politics dedicate the science …. And the fact is that almost all the science we were hearing – for example, from organisations like the World Health Organisation – was wrong. We had Facebook censoring [views contrary to] the World Health Organisation. This has been a disgraceful situation for science.

The net result was an arrested development in the public understanding of Covid-19 whereby official accounts of The Virus™ and its countermeasures were strategically frozen at a very early moment in time, before any genuine scientific understanding could form. That arrested public understanding has been prohibited from evolving ever since. Doctors, scientists, journalists, academics, and citizens have been threatened, fired, censored, de-platformed, and attacked, including by paramilitary police, for daring to question The Science™. Two and a half years later, orders remain in place granting medical registration boards the power to revoke licenses of health practitioners who "undermine" the "immunization campaign", even as the rationale for that campaign collapses (Anderson et al., 2022; Bhakdi et al., 2022; Blaylock, 2022; Broudy, 2021, p. 102; Chung, 2022; Classen 2021; Exposé, 2022a; Fraiman et al. 2022; Gutschi, 2022; Maholtra, 2022a, 2022b; Oller & Santiago 2022; Santiago, 2022; Seneff & Nigh, 2021), and the vaccinated across all age groups die from all causes at a rate that is up to several fold higher than their fellow citizens who refused the holy grail of the manufactured pandemic – Covid "vaccines" (Altman et al., 2022, pp. 21-23; Beattie, 2021; Oller & Santiago, 2022).

There are those who continue to accept such practices as befitting genuine scientific endeavor. And there are those who do not. Answers as to the interests, agendas, and beneficiaries behind the manufactured pandemic and its countermeasures are not difficult to ascertain, thanks to a large literature of independent research, journalism, and scholarship (e.g. see Breggin & Breggin, 2021; Children's Health Defense, 2021; Corbett, 2017, 2022; Davis, 2022; Hughes, 2022a; 2022b; Kennedy Jr., 2021; Kyrie & Broudy, 2022a; Mercola, 2022b; Robinson, 2022; Unterhalt, 2022; Vedmore, 2022; Webb, 2022). More elusive is the question as to why so many people are still in the thrall of the Official Story. Which is where Professor of Clinical Psychology Mattias Desmet's theory of Mass Formation and his book, *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, come in (Desmet, 2022).

Explanation or Exoneration?

The theory of Mass Formation, coined and proposed to explain the dynamics of totalitarian societies by Mattias Desmet of Ghent University, brings together work by Hannah Arendt (2004) on totalitarianism and insights from group-based psychology, psychoanalysis, and hypnosis. It offers an account of how and why populations might not only submit to totalitarian control, but eagerly embrace it. The thesis holds that under societal conditions of free-floating anxiety, loneliness, meaninglessness and discontent, populations are ripe to believe stories that offer an object for their fear and anxiety. With a shared purpose, in a state of hypnotic fixation, populations fall into formation *en masse*, on a mission to annihilate the object of their collective angst. The behavior has precedent. As Walter Lippmann described in 1922, "the leader knows by experience that only when symbols have done their work is there a handle he can use to move a crowd. In the symbol emotion is discharged at a common target, and the idiosyncrasy of real ideas blotted out." In the contemporary process, Desmet (2022) posits, "the masses believe in the story not because it's accurate but because it creates a new social bond … In this way, the masses come to accept even the most absurd ideas as true, or at least to act as if they were true" (p. 97).

Following Arendt (2004), Desmet differentiates this totalitarian dynamic, which he claims emerges "the way complex, dynamic systems organize themselves in nature", such as "the way starlings swarm" (p. 125), from that of dictatorships, which are "based on instilling a fear of physical aggression" (p. 90). During the process of Mass Formation, according to Desmet, about 30 percent of the population is "hypnotized," 40-60 percent is not hypnotized but chooses to go along to get along, and a minority, somewhere between 10 and 30 percent, is not hypnotized and actively resists (p. 140).

With its eloquent analysis of psycho-political malaise in contemporary societies, and its elegantly simple language with which to capture the trance-like split from reality that segments of the population have exhibited since 2020, Desmet's book, released in 2022, whet an immense global appetite for psychological understanding. He has been hailed as "one of the most sincere, thoughtful, and important intellectuals of the twenty-first century," who "stands shoulder to shoulder with the likes of Arendt, Jung and Freud".

The enthusiasm for Desmet's ability to draw theoretical links between social conditions and the mass submission to Covid tyranny is understandable. The resounding gratitude to this Belgian clinical psychologist for demystifying such a mystifying phenomenon is palpable. However, looking more closely at where Desmet's thesis ultimately takes its reader, along an engaging and even mesmerizing trail, leads to a less enlightened, and less enlightening, destination.

Rather than trace the illusions of Covid-19 to the powerful entities and actors who have dictated and enforced The Science™ from the very beginning (Breggin & Breggin, 2021; Kennedy Jr., 2021; Broudy & Hoop, 2021; Broudy & Arakaki, 2020; Davis, 2022; Robinson, 2022), reappearing to steer the operation at every turn (Anderson et al., 2022; Hughes, 2022b; Knightly, 2022; Loffredo & Blumenthal, 2021a, 2021b; Loffredo & Webb, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Mercola, 2022c; Rockefeller Foundation, 2022; Stieber & Trigoso, 2022; Vandiver, 2022; WHO, 2021), *The Psychology of*

Totalitarianism maintains that populations have primarily their own neuroses and auto-oppressive impulses to blame. We, the victims of mass deception, are encouraged to turn the critical lens on ourselves, to contend with our own foolish naïveté.

For instance, while Desmet acknowledges that Klaus Schwab's Great Reset book and pandemic planning exercises by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Johns Hopkins University "described how society would go into lockdown as the result of a pandemic, that a bio-passport would be introduced, that people would be tracked and traced with subcutaneous sensors, and so on," he argues that any such "consistency" (p. 133) occurs because populations perpetually push their leaders in a totalitarian direction.

> "The modern crowd is always pushing in the same direction: the hyper-controlled society," (p. 127) he contends. As a result, experts' "decisions always move toward a more technologically and biomedically controlled society… The leaders of the masses — the so-called elite — give the people what they want. When fearful, the population wants a more controlled society." Leaders, according to Desmet, "sense what people crave and they adjust their plans in that direction" (pp. 133-134). Who knew we were all masochistic serfs seeking to be shackled by digital chains?

A woman appeals to police at an anti-lockdown protest in Ottawa. Source: 'Woman who's lost her career pleads with Trudeau's secret police'. Chinlee. Rumble

Not only are leaders led into totalitarianism by crowds seeking greater social control, writes Desmet, but those leaders enact their totalitarianism "blindly", under a hypnotic trance. "Totalitarian leaders are themselves caught in a form of hypnosis," he explains. "The leaders are not only hypnotized by their ideology but also by the masses" (p. 110).

Totalitarian tactics, therefore, "should be understood in terms of mass psychology rather than malicious, intentional deception" (p. 115).

Desmet's deconstruction of the underlying social phenomenon, in other words, casts the progenitors of fear and hysteria — those in positions of power who devise and launch sophisticated propaganda campaigns to drive fear-driven narratives — as satiating the appetites of the crowd. Anyone who disagrees with this thesis, Desmet argues in Chapter 8, is a conspiracy theorist.

And yet, the notion that populations asked for what they got, and got what they asked for, is wholly divorced from the material realities of Covid-19. In truth, citizens were effectively placed under house arrest, their societies and economies taken hostage, and offered only one path out: the "vaccine." The "biomedically controlled society" (p. 133) ushered in under Covid countermeasures had to be forcibly imposed upon citizens. Mass surrender of bodily autonomy was only achieved by threatening entire populations with the loss of their livelihoods, being excluded from society and locked out of education, socialization, and even healthcare, should they fail to submit.

Not to mention the reality that, even under such duress, rather than "modern crowds" "pushing" towards a "hyper-controlled society", as Desmet argues (p. 127), from the earliest attempts at Covid "vaccine" mandates, populations marched against the Covid measures in their millions around the world, at an unprecedented frequency and scale (in Australia; Barcelona; Berlin; Brazil; Brussels; Canada; France; Holland; Israel; Italy; Lithuania; London; New York; Vienna and more). The protesters have been met with armed police, soldiers, paramilitary squads, armored vehicles, tear gas, pepper spray, and water cannons. The acute social tensions and assorted forms of viciousness evident in these scenes go unaddressed in *The Psychology of Totalitarianism* — save for a fleeting mention of the "10 to 30 percent" of the population that "actively resists" [p. 140]). If totalitarianism, as expressed in Carl Schmitt's concept of the political, is about the "suppression and elimination of social relations" (Teschke 2011, pp. 86-7), then — in that respect — Desmet's book ironically models the very kind of thinking it aims to critique.

Hundreds of thousands protesting against Covid measures in Melbourne, Australia. Source: 'Hundreds of thousands march in Melbourne'. True Arrow. YouTube.

Rather than acknowledging the victims of official violence, Desmet casts authorities as victims of their own self-destructive responses to the "will" (p. 126) of the crowd: "The totalitarian leader blindly sacrifices his own interests … [for instance] in the recklessness with which totalitarian regimes destroy their own economies and wreak economic havoc" (p. 112), he says. And yet, according to Oxfam, a new billionaire was created every 30 hours during the "pandemic." What, precisely, were the obscenely wealthy sacrificing?

In fact, the Mass Formation thesis necessitates a fundamental revision of the history of Covid-19. It is a revision in which pre-meditation and violence by authorities is blotted out, and the scale of resistance from citizens even against armed repression and state brutality, is comprehensively downplayed. Which begs the question: Given the empirical reality of the orchestrated mass casualties inflicted by Covid countermeasures, the overnight imposition of tyrannical control, the use of violence, the material evidence of pre-planning, and the sustained infliction of foreseeable mass harm (Beattie, 2022; Bhakdi et al., 2022; Mercola, 2022c; Risch, 2022; Truth for Health, 2022), are we really looking at Mass Formation? Or is 'mass atrocity' a more appropriate term?

Police tackle and punch a woman at a protest against Covid measures in Germany. Source: 'Disturbing acts of Violence by German and Australian Gestapo-like troupes against peaceful protest'. Light Up the Darkness. Bitchute.

Subjugated Knowledge: Intellectual Burial and Mass Atrocity

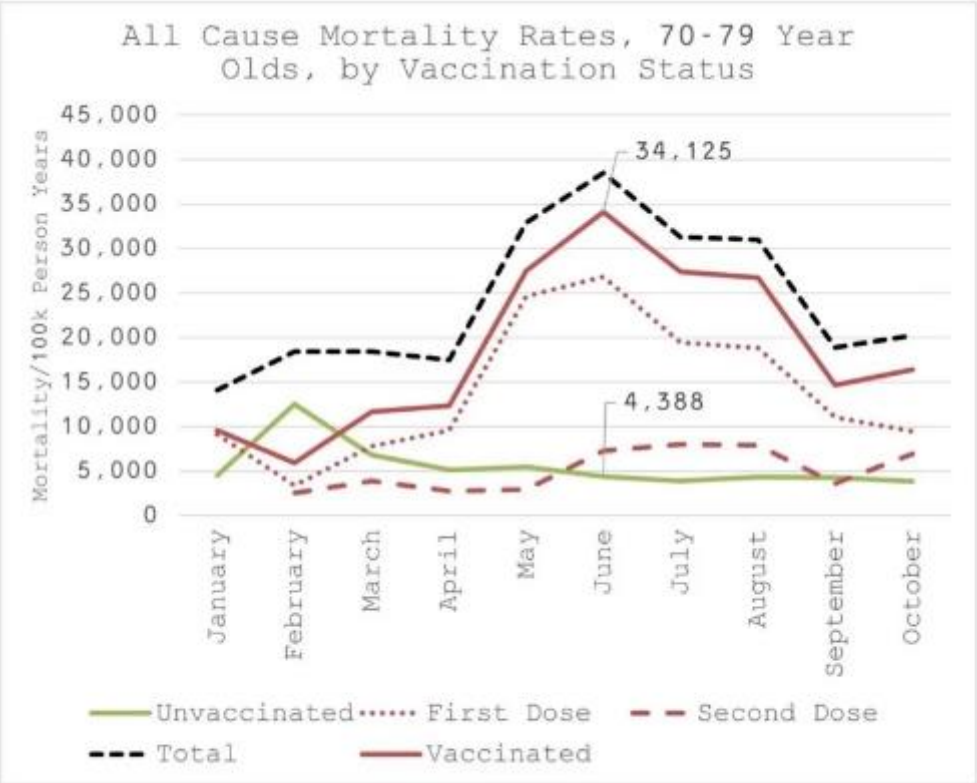
An atrocity is defined by the Cambridge Online Dictionary as an "extremely cruel, violent or shocking act", as in the sentence: "They are on trial for committing atrocities against the civilian population."

Shock, a defining feature of atrocity, is itself defined as "the emotional or physical reaction to a sudden, unexpected and unusually unpleasant event or experience." It is illustrated with the sentence: "I was in a state of shock for about two weeks after the accident." Atrocities, in other words, are difficult to digest and comprehend.

While atrocities may be committed on an individual scale, mass atrocities are defined by *the Journal of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* as acts of "extreme violence inflicted on a large scale or in a deliberate manner, particularly on civilians and noncombatants, by State or non-State actors." Examples typically include crimes against humanity, which the International Criminal Court lists as including "murder, extermination … unlawful deprivation of liberty … collective persecution … apartheid and other similar inhumane acts causing great suffering or serious injury."

Despite their shocking and unfathomable nature, mass atrocities are not rare. History books, and nightly news broadcasts, are littered with them, in the form of war, persecution, repressive governance and state-corporate crime.

Given the scale of the damage wrought by the disingenuous official measures and official Science™ in the name of Covid-19, it is not difficult to describe Covid countermeasures using the language of mass atrocity. "State and non-State actors" have inflicted policies upon "civilians and noncombatants", causing foreseeable and preventable death ("murder" or "extermination"), through lockdowns (Bhattacharya & Packalen, 2020; Green & Battacharya, 2021), treatment-suppression (Risch, 2022; Mercola, 2021) and vaccine mandates (Altman et al., 2022, pp. 21-23; Armstrong, 2021; Beattie, 2021; Expose, 2022b; Goss, 2022; Oller & Santiago, 2022) on a "large scale", numbering in their millions and counting (Armstrong, 2021; Battacharya & Packalen, 2020; Mercola, 2021). Other "acts causing great suffering or serious injury" have included vaccine injuries (Beattie, 2022; Bhakdi et al., 2022; Goss, 2022; Palmer & Bhakdi, 2022; Redshaw, 2022; Stieber, 2022), mass unemployment (Bianchi et al., 2021; Germanos, 2020), mass poverty (BBC, 2020; Oxfam, 2022) and mass hunger (Battacharya & Packalen, 2020; World Food Programme, 2020), themselves all leading global causes of illness and disease (Bianchi et al., 2021; Black et al., 2008; Gupta et al., 2007; Szabo, 2021). Further harms have ensued from "unlawful deprivation of liberty" including forced medical experimentation, denial of freedom of movement, freedom of speech and bodily autonomy, alongside "collective persecution" through a fraudulent vaccine "apartheid."



5:All-Cause Mortality 1 January to 31 October 2021 ages 70–79 years:
Rate of Death up to 7.8 times higher in Vaccinated versus Unvaccinated.

In short, applying the lens of atrocity to Covid countermeasures is an obvious imperative. Ignoring it is an obvious oversight.

In *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, the word "atrocity" appears just three times. It is used not to describe the carnage wreaked by the response to Covid-19 but to warn against future harms from untamed populations. Desmet writes that under the thrall of Mass Formation, "The masses are inclined to commit atrocities against those who resist them and typically execute them as if it were an ethical, sacred duty" (p. 104). "Don't underestimate where this could go in the future," he warns. "We can see what appears on the horizon: random roundups, arbitrary isolation, and discretionary 'treatment' of 'infected' people" (pp. 115-16). It is as though huge numbers of people had not already been told to "self-isolate" based on tests not fit for purpose and prone to false positive results, as well as forced to pay for their own isolation in hotels when traveling between countries. Moreover, it is as though the intense propaganda campaign to demonize the "unvaccinated" as disease carriers (modeled on Nazi treatment of Jews as vermin, and epitomized by CDC Director Rochelle Walensky's phrase, "pandemic of the unvaccinated") had never taken place.

The Psychology of Atrocity 101

Psychologically speaking, atrocity, like Mass Formation, is a collective endeavor. Since World War II, psychological researchers have investigated psychological processes capable of fueling collective violence and atrocity in the hopes that travesties such as mass killing might be prevented from happening again (Reicher & Haslam, 2006). Studies on obedience to authority (Milgram 1974), system justification (Jost, 2018), moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999; Zimbardo 2007), dehumanization of outgroups (Kelman, 2005; Moshman, 2007; Waytz & Schroeder, 2014), passive bystanding (Staub, 1999; 2015), and the psychology of genocide (Mandel, 2002a; Melson & Hanic, 2017; Moshman, 2007; Staub, 1999), to name a few, have illuminated key psychological ingredients of mass harm. When invoked, those ingredients combine to create the necessary pre-conditions for atrocity-generating conditions to arise (eg Dutton et al., 2005; Reicher et al., 2008; Staub, 1989). They are the same ingredients that propaganda campaigns target in order to manufacture consent for war and violence, as we have outlined in a "propaganda recipe" (Kyrie & Broudy, 2022) with respect to the War on Terror, and the war on humanity being waged in the name of Covid-19.

Simply put, under atrocity-generating conditions, society's roles and relationships are perverted such that members of a society begin to march, *en masse* and in formation, into the abyss of their own destruction. Not "like flocking starlings", as Desmet argues (p. 42), but under instruction. As in any other shared societal struggle against a common

enemy, the public mind must be effectively conditioned, regimented and, as Edward Bernays noted, universally and continuously occupied, "every bit as much as an army regiments the bodies of its soldiers" (1928/2004, p. 25) with optimal levels of fear and outrage so that the projected sacrifice of bodies will be judged as necessary and justified.

During the march through atrocity, participants are understood as falling into several key roles. There are victims who suffer the harm, perpetrators who inflict it, active bystanders who seek to intervene and passive bystanders who decline to take a stand. As the Mass Formation hypothesis suggests, these categories are not mutually exclusive. A doctor who administers a lethal injection, for instance, may double as a victim who has been mesmerized, or traumatized, into giving and receiving the injection themselves.

Perpetrators, however, like the members of the societies that spawn them, come in different shapes and sizes. They range from unwitting foot soldiers, the "dull bureaucrats and technocrats" that Desmet describes (p. 2), to more cognizant actors. The US State Department subsidiary USAID, for example, differentiates between high-level perpetrators "who are responsible for orchestrating mass atrocities [and] are the ones who control states", mid-level perpetrators "who translate national policy into concrete action on the ground", and low-level perpetrators "who carry out physical violence."

More fundamentally, writes psychologist David Mandel (2002b), behind atrocity-generating conditions lies a special class of actor whose role is to incite others to inflict harm. These participants Mandel calls instigators, which is where *The Psychology of Totalitarianism* falls down. The instigator's role, Mandel writes, is "not to carry out the acts of violence themselves, but to tune and transmit the messages that will effectively motivate others to cause harm and to provide perpetrators with the requisite resources for accomplishing their tasks" (p. 102). Mandel notes that:

> The power of instigators often derives from control of wealth (medium-grade power) and information (high-grade power) … Indeed, the power that the perpetrators derive in a system of collective violence is usually granted directly or indirectly by the instigating elite… An important feature of instigators is that they act as *catalysts* of collective violence, often by conveying a vision for a better life or by identifying a perceived source of threat in times of social unrest … Social and political analysts should pay much closer attention to the messages of figures who have the potential to influence mass opinion for, at present, we tend to underestimate their ability to catalyze change .. Put differently, the social influence of instigators and perpetrators is strongly asymmetric: Instigators shape the thinking and guide the behavior of perpetrators, but perpetrators have relatively little influence on the motives or plans of instigators (Mandel, 2002b, p. 102).

USAID adds, "a number of motives might drive high-level authorities, or elites, to mobilize mass atrocities; for example, the perception of threat to their power … Elites also often leverage existing social biases or grievances instrumentally to advance personal political goals."

It is not by accident, then, that the very definition of atrocity is illustrated with the sentence: "They are on trial for committing atrocities against the civilian population."

Nowhere in *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, however, is an instigator to be found. Utterly divorced from the psychology of atrocity, the Mass Formation thesis holds that "the real masters of the predicament are not the leaders of totalitarian systems, but the stories and their underlying ideology; these ideologies take possession of everyone and belong to no one; everyone plays a part, nobody knows the full script" (pp. 119-20).

Which is itself a story under which instigators of mass atrocities may wash their hands clean. Victims' families have nothing but a "story" to blame for their loved ones' deaths. They are bereaved by a crime committed by "everyone and no-one". There can be no placing anyone on trial for committing atrocities against the civilian population. After all, Desmet writes, the butterfly effect means that "the cause of things can be situated everywhere." Such is the power of the passive voice to extricate the perpetrating agent from possible blame, as in George W. Bush's "mistakes are made" (2004).

Saira Mohamed, Assistant Professor of Law, University of California, Berkeley, on the other hand, notes:

> The law of mass atrocity readily recognizes that responsibility and punishment for the world's worst horrors… ought to fall primarily on the political, military, or community leaders who bring about these systematic crimes… Moral persuasion should be acknowledged as culpable criminal conduct on the part of leaders as a matter of both law and morality (Mohamed, 2017, pp. 777, 781).

Desmet concedes that "there most certainly is all kinds of manipulation" in today's world, exacerbated by the "phenomenal" power of the media, yet this is "primarily not a steering by individuals; the most fundamental steering is impersonal in nature … driven by an ideology — a way of thinking" (p. 131). And again: "The ultimate master is the ideology, not the elite" (p. 134). Thus, no one is to blame. There are no hidden agendas or class forces, no bad actors pulling the strings from off stage.

In the real world, meanwhile, as the Covid nightmare continues to unfold, those who tune and transmit the messages to do harm are once more making themselves, and their messages of "moral persuasion" (Mohamed, 2017, p. 781), known. With vaccine deaths accumulating and public aversion to the "vaccination" campaign on the rise, rather than "sensing what people crave" (i.e. an end to Nuremberg Code violations through relentless pressure to take experimental injections containing all manner of undisclosed

ingredients) and "adjust[ing] their plans accordingly" (Desmet 2022, p. 134), the Rockefeller Foundation is spearheading a brand new propaganda offensive.

'Top of Rockefeller Center' by Barabeke, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

A press release from the Rockefeller Foundation on August 23, 2022 reads, "Through the Mercury Project—enabled by The Rockefeller Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Craig Newmark Philanthropies, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation with a total of USD 10.25 million so far—the SSRC is supporting a first cohort of social and behavioral scientists from around the world to generate much-needed new research on … low Covid-19 vaccination rates … [and] to identify interventions with the potential to increase vaccination take-up." Yet, according to Desmet, "[elite] plans and visions are not … 'forced' on the population" (p. 134).

Which belies the fact that identifying the instigators of atrocities committed in the name of Covid-19 is not rocket science. It is, rather, basic social science (deMerritt, 2016; Kelman, 2005; Mandel, 2022b; Robinson, 2022; Ruggiero, 2007), political science (Phillips, 2018; Hughes, 2022a), and investigative reporting (Corbett, 2017, 2022; Davis, 2022; Kennedy Jr., 2021; Vedmore, 2022). The conflicts of interest running through Covid policy lead predictably back through domestic and international "public-private partnerships" and governing institutions to Big Finance, central banks, and their founding banking families (Children's Health Defense, 2021; Mercola, 2022b). A useful visualization of contemporary global power structures is provided by Davis (2021).

As vampiric practices of capitalism engorge themselves on humanity in its transition through inverted totalitarianism (Wolin, 2004, cf. Hedges, 2015) to more recognizable

forms of totalitarianism involving Nazism (Hughes, 2022a) and eugenics (Kyrie & Broudy, 2022c; Loffredo & Webb, 2020b; Matters, 2021), given a yet more evil twist through sexual blackmail operations involving children (Webb, 2022), the conclusion that, "the essence of totalitarianism is not utilitarian or selfish in nature" (Desmet, 2022, p. 112) is impossible to maintain. Indeed, history teaches that the "greater good" is often an illusion, designed to mask the pursuit of ruling class interests.

The Anatomy of Atrocity

In order to deform the body politic such that everyday roles and relationships sustain the deadly dance of victims, perpetrators and bystanders, the psychological ingredients of atrocity-generating conditions must be activated. These psychological ingredients are putty in instigators' hands. Group-based processes such as conformity (Tritsch, 2013) and reality-sharing (Echterhoff & Higgins, 2018; Jost et al., 2008; Wan et al., 2010), for instance, which are cornerstones of Desmet's thesis, are well-known targets in mobilising populations for war, hatred and violence (Durrheim et al., 2016; Rath, 2016; Reicher et al., 2005). Official enemies are created and maintained (The Virus™, the unvaccinated / anti-vaxxers), fear and rage are mobilized (eg with "nudge" units), violent, oppressive solutions are proposed (denial of treatment, lethal "vaccines", vaccine mandates, vaccine apartheid) and dissenters are punished, pilloried and smeared, driving widespread retreat into the safety of conformist groups. Thus, by exploiting the human needs for physical and social survival a war is born, not as a spontaneous accident erupting from the subconscious of malcontent populations, but carefully imposed from conception through planning to its incarnation in flesh and blood (eg Kramer et al., 2005; Klein & Lavery, 2011).

Paradoxically, the Mass Formation thesis itself embodies important psychological aspects of such atrocity-generation, and serves in its own way — however inadvertently — to tune and transmit messages to do harm.

System Justification

Take, for instance, the neutralizing influence of what is known as "system justification". System justification consists of a variety of social-psychological blind-spots that serve to conceal systemic societal failures. Described as a "fundamental delusion" about the social and political world (Cichocka & Jost, 2014, p.10), system justification is driven by the motive to view one's own social systems — one's governments, institutions and authorities — as legitimate, right, fair and just (Jost, 2018; Jost et al., 2015). When confronted with evidence to the contrary, the predominant human impulse is to distort reality-perception so as to maintain the preferred view of the system as legitimate (eg see Blasi & Jost, 2006; Jost, 2018). System-justifying strategies include refusal to engage

with evidence, blanket endorsement and/or defense of the status quo, discrediting the source of the information, e.g. as "conspiracy theorists", blaming victims, and adopting system-justifying ideologies, such as an ideology in which mass harm is caused by "everyone and no-one" (Desmet, 2022, p. 120).

To see how reality-perception gets distorted through system justification, consider Desmet's views on "lockdowns." "During the coronavirus crisis," he writes, "a large part of the population accepted with remarkable ease measures that destroyed their enjoyment of life, freedom, and prosperity" (p. 102). This is reminiscent of the "millions in [Nazi] Germany [who] were as eager to surrender their freedom as their fathers were to fight for it" (Fromm, 1942, p. 3).

Such an extraordinary phenomenon, which runs contrary to human nature and self-interest, does not happen by accident. In the Covid-19 context, we are almost certainly looking at an extremely well-planned psychological warfare operation, modeled on techniques developed in Nazi Germany, intended to destroy liberal democracy by rendering the bulk of the population unwilling or unable to fight to defend freedom (Hughes 2022a). Yet in Desmet's depoliticized world, the reason why people were willing to put up with so much pain and suffering is that a "hypnotic story" focused their attention on a "small aspect of reality to such a degree that everything outside it, including one's own pain and to a broader extent, one's own interests, passes unnoticed" (p. 102). There is no consideration of who was telling that "hypnotic story," to what end, or what perception management techniques were used to sell it.

Instead, Desmet tries making his case using a bizarre surgical analogy: "With a simple hypnotic procedure, patients can be anesthetized to such a degree that surgical incisions can be made painlessly" (p. 102). Appearing on *InfoWars*, Desmet claimed to have witnessed with his own eyes open heart surgery being performed using hypnosis in place of anesthetic — and later admitted this was not true. Is Desmet's flight into surreal explanations a psychological defense mechanism intended to shut out the trauma of the "lockdowns" and to maintain the delusion that a system at war with the people is fundamentally humane?

Child and his teddy bear, both masked, during Covid lockdown.

Among the systemic flaws capable of provoking system justification is the innocent victim. Victims of harm, particularly innocent victims and victims of unpunished crime, have been found to threaten observers' beliefs in a just world, leading to defensive victim-blaming (Correia et al., 2012; Hafer, 2000; Tarrant et al., 2011; van Prooijen & van den Bos, 2009). The effect has been demonstrated for crimes including rape, human trafficking, hate-crimes and genocide (Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006; Ek, 2019; Mallett et al., 2011; Stahl et al., 2010; Sullivan et al., 2016).

There are shades of victim-blaming in *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*. Those caught in the grip of Mass Formation, Desmet argues, "still have the ability to make ethical choices" and so should not be "forgiven just like that" for the crimes they commit (p. 108). In contrast, "those who guide the masses" are so innocent that they are "like a child sitting on the bow of a ship and turning a toy steering wheel every time the tanker changes direction" (p. 134). In one troubling passage, Desmet writes:

> Think of 425 young Dutch Jews who, after fighting with a German security police detachment, were tortured for months on end in Buchenwald, to the point of death. Still, the extent to which victims repeatedly complied with the plans of Nazi executioners should not be ignored from a psychological perspective; apparently many of them were also in the grip of mass formation (p. 109).

Here, the act of resistance and the force of the atrocity barely register; Nazi terror is not discussed. Instead, Desmet makes it seem like a mystery why so many Jews compliantly boarded the trains to the death camps, knowing what awaited them (p. 109). With state

terror and atrocity having been elided, there is almost the suggestion that the Jews should have done more to resist; only Mass Formation explains why they did not. Not just the Jews, but the masses as a whole appear to be blamed for their "almost limitless tolerance for the enormous personal damage the population endured" under twentieth-century totalitarianism (p. 103). One is reminded of Aleister Crowley's description of "the people" as "that canting, whining, servile breed of whipped dogs which refuses to admit its deity" (1975, 116). An elitist disdain for the masses appears to lurk just below the surface of the Mass Formation thesis.

In reading Desmet, it is hardly possible to shake the feeling that we have heard the same sorts of caricatures propagated about the public before. Notable among them is Walter Lippmann's eloquent characterization in *The Phantom Public* (1925) that common citizens live in a world they cannot see, cannot hope to grasp nor direct its course. We common citizens are merely outsiders "necessarily ignorant, usually irrelevant and often meddlesome, because [we are] trying to navigate the ship from dry land" (p. 140). Since democracy is incapable, in Lippmann's view, of delivering on its promised freedoms, but leads only to "disillusionment and meddlesome tyranny," the "public must be put in its place, so that it may exercise its own powers, … so that each of us may live free of the trampling and the roar of the bewildered herd" (p. 145).

Further, in his seminal work *Propaganda* (1928), Edward Bernays offers similar generalizations, presupposing citizens "have voluntarily agreed to let an invisible government sift the data and high-spot the outstanding issues so that our field of choice shall be narrowed by practical proportions" (p. 11). This is likely why we find academics today, Desmet among them, who suppose that they are merely building upon the foundations of their esteemed forebears by supporting the invisible powers that be, who arrogate to themselves license to enact a plethora of harms upon citizens. To wit, the Mass Formation thesis forms part of an intellectual tradition whereby the masses get the propaganda, according to Lippmann and Bernays, and the totalitarianism, according to Desmet, that their base psychological functioning demands.

In addition to victim-blaming, system justification fosters resistance to holding perpetrators accountable. System-justifying tendencies have been found to promote acceptance of corruption (Tan et al., 2017), tolerance for civilian casualties during war (Friedman & Sutton, 2013, in Jost, 2018) — "we don't do body counts" (Williams, 2005) — and lack of support for hate crime legislation (Mallett et al., 2011).

Under the influence of system-justifying delusions "our" wars are humanitarian, "our" tyranny is democratic, and "our" atrocities are perpetrated with the best of intent. Accordingly, "Official Sources" and "The Science" may conduct mass extermination under the rubric of "public health".

With its refusal to entertain the possibility that "elite" actors can behave with any *mens rea*, and its insinuation that the masses are somehow responsible for their own abuse, *The Psychology of Totalitarianism* is not only influenced by, but predicated upon, system-justifying foundations. The Mass Formation thesis throws up a swarm of

starlings between the reader and a predator class (see 'dark leadership' research such as Chen et al., 2020; Peterson & Palmer, 2021; Wisse & Sleebos, 2016), whose long history of fraud, bloodshed and state-corporate crime is well-documented (Blum 2006; Chomsky 2006; Chomsky 2007; Valentine 2017; Scott 2017; Hughes, 2022a). In this way, while psychoanalyzing tyranny, the theory paradoxically serves as an attractive and intellectually satisfying system-justifying veil behind which the architects of atrocity can hide.

Moral Disengagement

A means of distorting reality so as to maintain a system-justifying worldview is to morally disengage. Moral disengagement is a psychological process by which a specific event, such as mass extermination, can be placed outside the boundaries of one's usual moral frame (Bandura, 1999; Opotow, 1990). A common device for achieving this is sanitizing language (Bandura, 2002; Cohen, 2001). Wrapped in the balm of neutral and forgettable terms, harm is rhetorically cleansed (e.g. Poole, 2007), the reality fails to emotionally register, and indifference is invoked (Passini, 2017). Hence, the banality of evil. Just as sexually assaulting victims with medical equipment was described as "enhanced interrogation" in the War on Terror, so mass killing is disguised using anodyne-sounding medical language for the War on Covid-19™.

In the same vein, the very term "Mass Formation" is sanitizing. Tellingly, Desmet is keen to distinguish it from the term with which his work is commonly associated, i.e. "Mass Formation Psychosis." "Psychosis" gets us closer to the phenomenon that Desmet is really referring to. According to Versluis, for instance, "the totalitarian systems of the 20th century represent a kind of collective psychosis" (2006, 143). However, this then quickly leads to the themes of barbarism and atrocity which Desmet seems at pains to avoid in the Covid context. Carl Jung, trying to make sense of the Hitler years in 1945, reflects:

> The phenomenon we have witnessed in Germany was nothing less than the first outbreak of epidemic insanity, an irruption of the unconscious into what seemed to be a tolerably well-ordered world. A whole nation, as well as countless millions belonging to other nations, were swept into the blood-drenched madness of a war of extermination. No one knew what was happening to [them], least of all the Germans, who allowed themselves to be driven to the slaughterhouse by their leading psychopaths like hypnotized sheep. (Jung 1970, 212)

Such a "mass psychosis," Jung adds, was evident from the moment Hitler seized power, yet "I could not help telling myself that this was after all Germany, a civilized European nation with a sense of morality […]" (Jung 1970, 236). For those who remain unhypnotized, the parallels between what Jung describes and life in the "civilized West"

today are ominous. Covid-19 did indeed unleash an outbreak of epidemic insanity through all the deliberately absurd "measures," and most of the population continues to get swept along, unthinkingly, by propaganda for whatever the latest official narrative is: support for Ukraine (despite political opposition being banned there and Nazi groups operating), reverence for the Royal Family (despite its dark history and proven close ties to Jimmy Savile and Jeffrey Epstein), and so on. Today's "leading psychopaths" are apparently driving the "hypnotized sheep" wherever they like, and the last time this occurred it ended in World War II and the Holocaust.

Desmet naturalizes, and thereby tacitly legitimizes such mass psychosis as Mass Formation by claiming that it occurs just as "complex, dynamic systems organize themselves in nature" (p. 125). The maneuver can be understood as embodying a morally disengaging strategy known as the "agentless passive voice", which psychologist Albert Bandura describes as an "exonerative tool. It creates the appearance that reprehensible acts are the work of nameless forces, rather than people. It is as though people are moved mechanically but are not really the agents of their own acts" (Bandura, 2002, p. 105). Desmet also claims that Mass Formation emerged "in a more or less spontaneous way" in Nazi Germany, ignoring the role of the mass media and Goebbels' mastery of propaganda.

Totalitarian mass psychosis does not just arise organically, however. Rather, it is deliberately inculcated by the ruling class. The real lesson from Nazi Germany is that

> … [m]ass delusion can be induced. It is simply a question of organizing and manipulating collective feelings in the proper way. If one can isolate the mass, allow no free thinking, no free exchanges, no outside corrective, and can hypnotize the group daily with noises, with press and radio and television, with fear and pseudo-enthusiasms, any delusion can be instilled. People will begin to accept the most primitive and inappropriate acts. (Meerloo 1956, 202-3)

These techniques — isolation, monopolization of perception, fear-mongering, etc. — were integral to the Covid psychological operation and explain the willingness of the deluded masses to adopt the most primitive, inappropriate, and harmful of behaviors, such as mask wearing and neurotically avoiding other people. We know that Allen Dulles was tapping Jung for psychological profiles of Hitler and other Nazi leaders as early as 1943 (Kinzer 2013, p. 71), and it is almost certain that the CIA would have paid close attention to proven techniques for manufacturing mass psychosis in Nazi Germany.

In keeping with the language of atrocity, *The Psychology of Totalitarianism* describes the carnage of Covid countermeasures in detached and minimizing terms. For example, Desmet uses the military euphemism "collateral damage" to refer to "people who fall victim as a result of the measures" (p. 102) — ignoring the fact that the "measures" were cast as necessary tactics in a "war" against the virus, as part of what General Pompeo called a "live exercise." The victims include those who died in care homes, those who died because of postponed medical treatments, victims of domestic violence (which

increased during "lockdown"), and, most tellingly, "people affected by side effects of vaccination" (p. 102). "Side effects." Those two soothing words are as close as Desmet comes to considering the hundreds of thousands to millions maimed and killed by the so-called Covid-19 "vaccines" (Altman et al., 2022, pp. 21-23; Armstrong, 2021; Beattie, 2021; Expose, 2022b; Goss, 2022; Oller & Santiago, 2022; Redshaw, 2022). In a diagram depicting the victims of coronavirus measures (Figure 6.2, p. 101), there is no mention of "vaccine" victims. Nowhere in the book on Mass Formation are the terms "myocarditis," "blood clot" or "stroke" to be encountered. All of which illustrates a second tactic for eliciting moral disengagement: *out-of-sight-out-of-mind* (Bandura, 2002; Cohen, 2001).

Moral Erasure: Experimenting on Human Beings and Evidence of Democide

Albert Bandura, who pioneered moral disengagement theory, made the simple observation that, "it is easier to harm others when their suffering is not visible" (Bandura, 2002, p. 108). To enable the perpetration of inhumanities, then, the human consequences of those inhumanities must be morally erased, by being disregarded, ignored, denied, or justified and sanctified, such that horror is perceptually excised (Bandura, 2002; Cohen, 2001). We see this phenomenon in action in Desmet's overlooking of the mass experimentation on human beings that has taken place in the name of dealing with Covid-19, as well as his downplaying of eugenics experiments and other crimes against humanity in Nazi Germany.

"Experimentation on humans is the prototypical activity of totalitarianism," Desmet writes with respect to Nazi concentration camps (p. 112). He does not mention Josef Mengele's eugenics experiments on concentration camp inmates, however. Rather, the "labor camps" were "pilot projects for an ideal society, where an elite learns how to subject a population to its ideology" and were "not profitable at all, barely even self-sufficient" (p. 112). Slave labour and mass murder, thus, recede from view as concentration camps acquire an unexpected utopian aspect.

Block 10, a cellblock at the Auschwitz Concentration Camp where women and men were used as experimental subjects for Nazi doctors. By V Manninen, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Correspondingly, Desmet neglects to mention the fact that, under Covid, the entire world has been transformed into a single, giant site of medical experimentation, with 5.45 billion people (as of 21 November 2022) — about 70 percent of the human race — having taken one or more unlicensed, experimental injections with no long-term safety data. As Barack Obama put it in April 2022, "we've now, essentially, clinically tested the vaccine on billions of people worldwide."

Nor does Desmet mention the "largest psychological experiment ever" — worldwide "lockdowns" — which the World Economic Forum in April 2020 knew would have "toxic effects." Indeed, the Stanford Prison Experiment (1971) was enough to show the catastrophic impact of a simulated prison environment on the mental health of previously well-adjusted people, including "emotional breakdowns and irrational thinking" on the part of the prisoners and "abusive and hostile" behavior on the part of the guards, some of whom "even qualified as sadistic torturers" (Zimbardo, 2005, p. 139). Add to these measures the "strategically [...] heightened emotional distress" inflicted by governments on their citizens to achieve behavior modification, plus the Zoom culture that "negatively affects our sense of mental well-being" (Schwab and Malleret, 2020, 162) — and the case for psychological warfare becomes strong.

Indeed, the results were consistent with a campaign of psychological warfare. Critics have pointed to "heightened levels of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and complicated bereavement" (Marmarosh et al. 2020, 122). Dutch researchers found that one in three people experienced a deterioration in their mental health during the first "lockdown" (van der Pijl 2022, 29). One meta-analysis of different studies finds that "individuals may experience symptoms of psychosis, anxiety, trauma, suicidal thoughts, and panic attacks" as a result of the "pandemic" (Salari et al. 2020). According to the Office for National Statistics (2020), the rate of depression among UK adults rose from 10 percent (July 2019 – March 2020) to 19 percent (June – November 2020); 60 percent of adults reported feeling stressed or anxious; and 34 percent reported a deterioration in their mental health (in keeping with a report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists [2022]). A 2022 meta-analysis finds that the first UK "lockdown" increased the rate of depression eight-fold, from four percent to 32 percent (Dettmann et al. 2022).

The population was also experimented on via other non-pharmaceutical interventions. According to the WHO on 5 June 2020, "At present, there is no direct evidence (from studies on Covid-19 and in healthy people in the community) on the effectiveness of universal masking of healthy people in the community to prevent infection with respiratory viruses, including Covid-19" — yet, in the same document, the WHO recommends that "governments should encourage the general public to wear masks in specific situations and settings." Six days later, a scientific literature review confirmed that "no study exists that shows a benefit from a broad policy to wear masks in public" (Rancourt 2020). Martin (2021, p. 25) is, therefore, correct to claim that "All parties mandating the use of face masks are … engaging in what amounts to a whole population clinical trial." Similarly for "social distancing": "To date, not a single study has confirmed that social distancing of any population prevented the transmission of, or the infection by, SARS CoV-2" (Martin 2021, p. 25). Billions of people, thus, became unwilling test subjects in a worldwide experiment. As the World Economic Forum reflects, "Covid-19 was the test of social responsibility [read compliance] – A huge number of unimaginable restrictions for public health were adopted by billions of citizens across the world."

Desmet cites studies reporting that "mice are 40 percent more likely to die from viral infections due to experimentally induced stress," and that the same mechanisms that cause reduced immunity are also present in humans, such that "stress leads to a higher mortality rate" (p. 167). This is "important for the coronavirus crisis," he notes, because of the viral aspect. He fails to consider, however, that perhaps the human population is now being subjected to experimentally induced stress. Schwab and Malleret, for instance, refer to the "lockdowns" as "the period of acute stress" (2020, p. 159), acute stress being characterized in a report on torture by "shock response, sudden reflex, fight or flight," corresponding to "capture in war" (Amnesty 1973, p. 35). Acute stress is not necessarily a bad thing: it represents a short-term adaptive reaction to challenges and forms "part of the survival mechanism," potentially enhancing the immune response; chronic or long-term stress, in contrast, is maladaptive and has detrimental effects on both physical and mental health — it "harms immune response" (Rancourt et al. 2021, p. 133).

Rancourt et al. (2021, p. 134) find that all-cause mortality data from the United States for 2020–21 is radically inconsistent with a purported viral "pandemic" (because of jurisdictional heterogeneity, also found in the UK [Kendrick 2022]), yet wholly consistent with the chronic stress generated by the enormous socio-economic disruptions brought about through Covid policy, which disproportionately impacted those at the bottom of the "societal dominance hierarchy" with the fewest means to adapt. They claim that:

> … in circumstances where large populations of vulnerable and susceptible residents have suppressed immune systems from chronic psychological stress induced by large-scale socio-economic disruption, […] the state has recreated the conditions that produced the horrendous bacterial pneumonia epidemic of 1918. (Rancourt et al. 2021, pp. 136-7)

In other words, wartime conditions. The scale of socio-economic disruption seen under Covid has only ever been witnessed in times of war.

Rancourt et al. (2021, pp. 135-7) go further by claiming that there was a bacterial pneumonia epidemic in the United States in 2020/21, as there was in 1918-1920, to which most "Covid-19" deaths were misattributed (2021, pp. 121, 135-7). They note that antibiotic prescriptions which might have treated bacterial pneumonia fell by half in March/April 2020. This is particularly suspicious given the remarkable "similarity in state-wise distributions of life expectancy at birth […] and antibiotic prescriptions" that would automatically point towards the wisdom of maintaining antibiotic availability, regardless of Covid-19 (Rancourt et al. 2021, p. 131). Safe and effective therapeutic agents such as hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin were deliberately suppressed, creating comparable conditions to 1918–20, when antibiotics had not yet been discovered (2021, pp. 136-7). These facts lead to troubling questions about intent and possible democide, and Rancourt et al. (2021, p. 132) are clear that "aggressive government and medical response to the WHO 11 March 2020 declaration of a pandemic" — and not the virus — was responsible for most of the deaths during the so-called "first wave." Moreover, further unexpected upsurges in all-cause mortality in the United States — during the summer of 2020, winter 2020/21, and the summer of 2021 — also reflect "deaths induced by the government measures, via the combined poverty, obesity and climatic factors, made potent by sustained chronic psychological stress" (Rancourt et al. 2021, p. 115).

Moral Justification: State-sponsored Euthanasia

In addition to minimizing, denying and ignoring the inhumanity of atrocities, an important "set of disengagement practices operates on the reconstruction of the behavior itself… In this process of moral justification, pernicious conduct is made

personally and socially acceptable by portraying it as serving socially worthy or moral purposes" (Bandura, 2002, p. 103).

Such moral justification facilitates victimization of specific groups by enabling "exclusion of target groups from protection of the state," explains Herbert C. Kelman (2005, p. 128), psychologist and Professor of Social Ethics at Harvard University. Ervin Staub (1999), psychologist and scholar of genocide, adds that, "limited discrimination changes to progressively greater discrimination, persecution, and violence against victimized groups. With 'steps along a continuum of destruction,' this can lead to mass killing or genocide" (p. 307). In the state response to Covid-19, under practices amounting to euthanasia in the name of a "good death", all of these psychological processes have been on display. All, however, are absent from *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*.

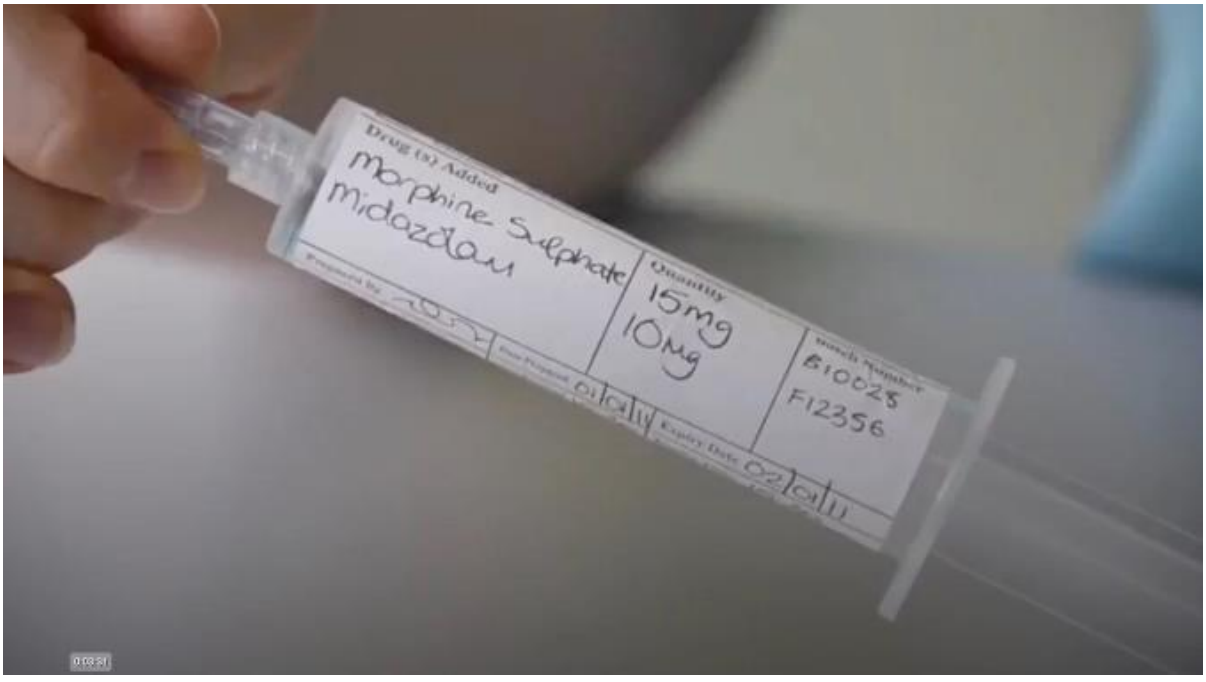
Desmet notes that the Nazis "called death in the gas chambers 'death of grace' (i.e. the least painful solution for people they felt were better off dead than alive)" (p. 108). Yet, he has nothing to say about Conservative MP Luke Evans asking Health Secretary Matt Hancock whether the NHS had enough syringe drivers, midazolam and morphine to be able to provide a "good death" for patients (a crude euphemism for euthanasia) during the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee on 17 April 2020. French company Accord Healthcare had just sold two years' worth of midazolam stock to UK wholesalers at the request of the NHS in March 2020. There was a huge spike in the prescription of midazolam hydrochloride in GP practices across NHS England in April 2020. Clare Wills Harrison and Mark Oakford provide a graph plotting midazolam prescriptions and all-cause mortality in the over-65s between January 2020 and March 2021: the former leads the latter, raising the possibility of what Harrison calls a "pre-planned, heavily inappropriate use of midazolam in care homes, hospices and hospitals."

National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline NG163 (published 3 April 2020) recommends: "When managing key symptoms of COVID-19 in the last hours and days of life, follow the relevant parts of NICE guideline [NG31] on care of dying adults in the last days of life. This includes pharmacological interventions and anticipatory prescribing." Concerned doctors pointed out in May 2020, however, that NG31 (2015) is based on terminal cancer patients and was aimed at people likely to die imminently from "advanced diseases, from which recovery was deemed most improbable" (Ahmedzai et al. 2020). NG163 (in its original formulation) tacitly encouraged practitioners to treat elderly people with Covid-19 as nearing the end of life and to apply palliative care accordingly. It also states: "Sedation and opioid use should not be withheld because of a fear of causing respiratory depression." Yet, according to retired neurologist Patrick Pullucino, "midazolam depresses respiration and it hastens death. It changes end of life care into euthanasia," in line with the theoretically retired Liverpool Care Pathway (cited in Adams and Bancroft 2020).

Freelance journalist Jacqui Deevoy exposes the UK midazolam scandal in her documentary, *A Good Death?*. The film contains numerous testimonials from adult

relatives of elderly victims who were put on midazolam against their family's wishes. In the words of one such relative, "What they [the doctors and nurses] are doing is involuntary euthanasia," because of lack of informed consent from either the victim or their family. Another relative opines: "If [medical professionals have] been asked to withdraw all observations without telling the family, to me it seems that's murder by stealth." Another claims: "They hid it from us. They hid what was going on." According to another, "The consultant said to us: it comes from above. What we do in here is all protocol" (one is tempted to say: following orders).

Consistent themes among the testimonials include: deliberate starvation and dehydration of patients; administering excess dosages of midazolam (often in conjunction with morphine, which is contraindicated in MHRA guidance); family wishes being ignored; nurses claiming that midazolam aids the respiratory system when in fact it does the opposite; the resultant deaths being blamed on Covid-19; and cremation without autopsy to show the true cause of death. One victim before her death told her son: "Get a wheelchair and get me out of this hospital now. They're trying to kill me." Stuart Wilkie in the film likens the use of midazolam to prolonged torture, gradually reducing the number of breaths per minute over the course of 29 hours. From the victim's perspective, he adds, "You know that the person who walks into the room and puts that drug into your body is slowly killing you." The victim, under a cocktail of medications, is robbed of the opportunity to see a priest or make any deathbed confessions.



Syringe containing morphine and midazolam, both respiratory depressants. From 'A Good Death?' by Jacqui Deevoy.

The danger is that the state-sanctioned euthanasia we have witnessed represents the thin end of the wedge. The origins of Nazi genocide, for instance, can be traced back to earlier euthanasia programs (Friedlander, 1995). The Nazi extermination of Jews,

Gypsies, and homosexuals during the war years was foreshadowed by the state-sanctioned sterilization and later "mercy killing" of people with disabilities (Mostert, 2002). The "life not worthy of life" concept, which found expression in the 1933 "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring," formed the basis of the "supreme duty of a national state to grant life and livelihood only to the healthy and hereditarily sound portion of the people," to quote Nazi Public Health Director Arthur Guett (Ehret, 2021). "Euthanasia killing" soon morphed into "killing the sick" (Foth, 2014). The notorious Aktion T4 program (1939-1945) killed an estimated 250,000-300,000 disabled people — first children, then adults (using "gassing installations"). The path from here to the Final Solution is not hard to fathom.

Hancock is a key representative of a 21st-century eugenics agenda. In November 2020, he announced travel exemptions for those seeking to travel abroad for assisted dying. In May 2021, he took the "first steps towards legalizing assisted suicide" by asking for official figures on how many people who have killed themselves for medical reasons, paving the way for Baroness Meacher to campaign for the Assisted Dying Bill. In June 2021, Hancock hinted in the House of Commons that those who refuse Covid-19 "vaccination" should be deprioritized for NHS treatment. He also resigned as Health Secretary that month when the midazolam revelations surfaced, video footage of his extramarital affair having been held back until then. In August 2022, he called for a Parliamentary inquiry and free vote on assisted dying.

All of this is evidence of eugenics — not just in the UK, but internationally (Ehret 2021). Yet, eugenics barely features in *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*. If anything, Desmet seems rather partial to eugenics, noting that Plato found it a "commendable practice" and that it "lead [sic.] to certain 'successes'" in the twentieth century (p. 47). "We have to seriously ask ourselves," he claims: "Why not follow the principle of eugenics?" (p. 48). Despite the known historical trajectory from Nazi eugenics beliefs, through the sterilization and murder of the disabled, all the way through to genocide and the Final Solution, the main problem with eugenics, from Desmet's perspective, is simply that it "has more disadvantages than advantages" (p. 48).

Derogation of Moral Advocates

In order to psychologically enforce moral disengagement from atrocities, "derogation of moral advocates" is deployed. Research indicates that those who denounce their own society's immoral activity typically attract derision, and are perceived negatively by the bystanding group (for instance as selfish, arrogant, annoying, traitorous and insulting) (Bashir, 2014; Bashir et al., 2013; O'Brien & Crandall, 2005; Sumanth et al., 2011). The author of the concept writes, "A growing body of research demonstrates… that individuals who take a stand against immoral behaviors (i.e., moral advocates) can elicit scorn rather than admiration" (Bashir, 2014, p. 1). That scorn arises not from a belief in the moral conduct of the society in question, but out of concern "about how the advocates have made their group look in the eyes of others" (Bashir, 2014, p. 3). To

defend the group's social image, "group members seem to adopt a 'shoot the messenger' approach" (Bashir, 2014, p. 30).

As a textbook illustration of the tactic, Desmet devotes a whole chapter to disparaging those who seek to hold powerful actors or interest groups accountable for the deaths, destruction, and tyranny of Covid-19 as conspiracy theorists. He brands their views "simplistic and caricatural" (p. 138), laboring under a Mass Formation of their own, teetering on the brink of the "absurd" and "fanatical" (p. 128). Desmet derogates such moral advocates by association with anecdotes involving "extraterrestrial" beings, lizard people, flat Earth theory, and satanism (pp. 124, 128, 130).

Branding moral advocates as conspiracy theorists, while tarring them by association with "absurd" and "fanatical" claims, however, not only serves to undergird moral disengagement, it carries increasingly tangible real-world implications. Desmet himself is aware that "the self-destructiveness of totalitarian systems typically reaches its peak the moment the system succeeds in gagging any dissenting voice and silencing the opposition" (p. 116). He also cites Gustave Le Bon on the importance of "dissonant voices" reducing the "depth of the hypnosis," thereby "helping to prevent the masses from committing atrocities" (p. 141).

Desmet's is not one of those "dissonant voices." He himself admits that he is "careful not to interpret what happened too much in terms of conspiracy." Doing so, he claims, would have put his speech "at risk of being cancelled." In other words, Desmet deliberately chooses not to speak truth to power, even though he claims to advocate for "Truth Speech." He continues: "I acknowledge that this is hardly an excuse. If crimes happen, if large numbers of people die, it doesn't matter what your expertise is. Every decent human being will recognize as his or her duty to simply articulate what everyone can see." Yet, sadly, in his studied avoidance of themes relating to mass atrocity, he fails to do just that.

Worse still, his analysis actually assists governing institutions to gag dissent by labelling it as "conspiracy theory", which a 2021 European Commission report has equated with "extremism" and "radicalization" and which the US Department of Homeland Security blames for "domestic terrorism." The European Commission report warns that "anti-establishment and anti-elite conspiracy theories" and "conspiracy theories in the COVID-19 context" carry "serious consequences" including to "incite people to violence …. Governments should therefore not underestimate the threat posed by the so-called non-violent groups and their conspiratorial mindset." The report urges states and their security agencies to take measures, including "finding a balance between freedom of speech and the necessity to protect society" (Farinelli, 2021, pp. 4, 6, 13, 14, 21). Aiding and abetting authorities in stigmatizing, censoring, marginalizing, and potentially criminalizing speech in this way is dangerous, not only to those who would speak out against obvious atrocity, but to the victims whose lives depend upon dissenting voices.

Desmet's chapter on "conspiracy and ideology" is profoundly confused. On the one hand, Desmet claims that the Holocaust involved "an intentional plan … There were

approximately five people who neatly and systematically prepared the entire Holocaust destruction apparatus, and they managed to make all the rest of the system cooperate with it in total blindness for a long time" (p. 136). To be clear, it was possible, in Desmet's view, for just five people to mastermind the Holocaust and to get everyone else to go along with the Final Solution (a term used, incidentally, by Bill Gates to describe Covid-19 "vaccines"). Yet, when it comes to Covid-19, "The 'plans' do not precede the developments, as a conspiracy logic likes to suggest. They rather *follow* them" (p. 134). In other words, nothing was planned, and any alleged plans have been read backwards into events which occurred spontaneously. This is despite reference to the "transition from a democracy to a totalitarian technocracy, in which the coronavirus crisis was a Great Leap forward" (2022, p. 132) — the "Great Leap" metaphor indicating both political intention and disastrous large-scale social engineering. How, then, can an academic of such rank not see the patterns of planned events?

The Rockefeller "Lock Step" scenario of 2010, the October 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic simulation Event 201, and Klaus Schwab and Thierry Malleret's World Economic Forum publication *COVID-19: The Great Reset* (from June 2020) are all cited, but regarded as non-conspiratorial because they are publicly available (i.e. not secret) and contain contradictions (Desmet 2022, pp. 132-33). Apparently, Desmet is unfamiliar with the concepts of open conspiracy and scenario planning (despite the four separate and mutually contradictory scenarios presented in the Rockefeller document he cites). Anyone who suspects centrally coordinated planning, according to Desmet, must be "confused" and under Mass Formation, suffering from an "intense need for a simple frame of reference, which allows him to mentally master the complexity, and in which to place and control the anxiety and other intense emotions that arise" (p. 127). Why is it, then, that just five people could "neatly and systematically" mastermind the Holocaust, yet any suggestion that the Covid-19 crisis was centrally planned by a relatively small number of perpetrators must be a sign of intellectual imbalance?

By the final chapter of the book, Desmet's apparent blindness to the criminal intentions of the ruling class reaches near farcical levels. Having earlier claimed that "The only consistency within the experts' discourse is that the decisions always move toward a more technologically and biomedically controlled society" (p. 133), he goes on to write:

> With every 'object of anxiety' that has emerged in our society in recent decades — terrorism, the climate problem, the coronavirus — [technocratic thinking] has leapt forward. The threat of terrorism induces the necessity of a surveillance apparatus, and our privacy is now seen as an irresponsible luxury; to control climate problems, we need to move to lab-printed meat, electric cars, and an online society; to protect against COVID-19, we have to replace our natural immunity with mRNA vaccine-induced artificial immunity (p. 176).

Why can Desmet not see that these escalating attacks on human freedom are *by design*, and that the threats he mentions have all been artificially manufactured for that very purpose? Were it not for the seriousness of the subject matter, there would be an almost

touching political *naïveté* about the views of this psychology professor, whose book on the psychology of totalitarianism only really deals with totalitarianism in its middle section (57 of 188 pages excluding bibliography — about 30 percent of the content).

The anxiety to which Desmet (2022, 176) alludes is necessary to manufacture consent for the "inevitability" of transhumanism and invasive bio-surveillance. Although Desmet seems rightly uneasy about the prospect of these dystopian agendas, he nevertheless appears to accept — inexplicably — their inevitability (and is, to that extent, thus, himself a victim of fear-based propaganda):

> The fourth industrial revolution, in which man is expected to physically merge with technology — the transhumanist ideal — is increasingly seen as an unavoidable necessity. The entire society has to change into an internet of bodies, in which the human body is digitally monitored, tracked, and traced by a technocratic government. This is the only way we will be able to master the problems of the future. There is no alternative. Anyone who refuses to go along with the technological solution is naive and 'unscientific' (p. 176).

This is an entire standalone paragraph. There is no critical commentary on the remarks made. It would be nice to know from whose perspective transhumanism is both an "ideal" to aspire to and precisely why it is an "unavoidable necessity."

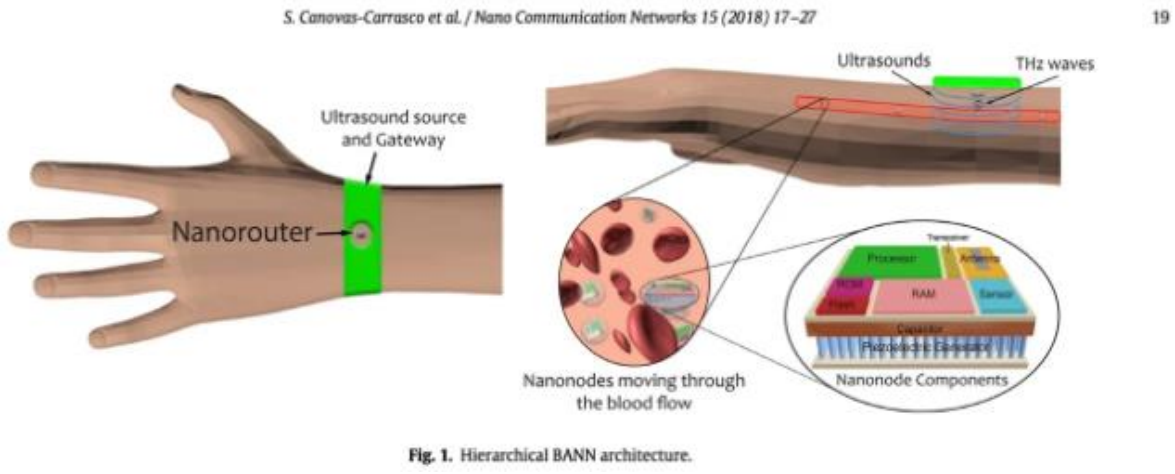


Fig. 1. Hierarchical BANN architecture.

Hierarchical BANN architecture. Image from Figure 1 of S. Canovas-Carrasco, A. J. Garcia-Sanchez, and J. Garcia-Haro (2018), A nanoscale communication network scheme and energy model for a human hand scenario. Nano Communication Networks, 15, 17-27. Reissued in compliance with the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/ pertaining to that work.

Getting Away With It: Mass Formation and Passive Bystanding

The chief danger in stretching the Mass Formation theory to cover the realities of Covid-19 is its potential to engender passive bystanding. The critical task of atrocity's instigators is not only to incite everyday citizens to perpetrate harm, but to neutralize and immobilize bystanders. As a document titled "Human Rights 101" by the Science and Human Rights Coalition states: "Unless citizens want their governments to support human rights, government leaders rarely will do so … [Human rights principles] carry no weight unless the people know them, unless the people understand them, unless the people demand that they be lived" (McFarland, 2015, p.16). In other words, where citizens fail to hold their leaders accountable, atrocity thrives. Like patterns of serial murder, patterns of mass atrocity can be expected to repeat and intensify if left unchecked.

It just so happens that human beings recognize forms and patterns and naturally categorize the phenomena they encounter to make sense of the world (Lakoff, 1987) — a deeply rooted human predisposition observed in developmental psychology and cognitive linguistics (Taniguchi et al. 2018, p. 8). It also explains why collaborators in conspiracies to do harm are often found out and, sometimes, are brought to justice (when judicial systems aren't bought and paid for). Staub, for example, (1999) observes how the fertile ground for genocide is cultivated:

> … leaders and a country's elite frequently intensify already existing hostility. They work to maintain differences between groups in power and status. They use propaganda to enhance devaluation of and fear of the other. They propagate a destructive ideology and thereby offer 'higher ideals' in behalf of action against the other. They create organizations that are potential instruments of violence (p. 308).

However, the only patterns that Desmet recognizes when it comes to totalitarianism are mathematically pleasing ones, like the Sierpinski triangle (p. 122) or "the way complex, dynamic systems organize themselves in nature" (p. 125). The trouble is, humans, endowed with reason and the capacity for critical self-reflection, are far more complex than non-conscious systems acting on pure instinct, like flocking starlings. The category mistake Desmet makes should be self-evident. His attempt to reduce socio-political phenomena to patterns found in nature is, ironically, a hallmark of the scientism of which he is otherwise rightly critical. Rhetorically, it simultaneously serves to imbue totalitarianism with associations of natural beauty.

In contrast, we offer for reflection a partial list of patterns of purposeful contaminations and adulterations of products, people and the biosphere that preceded the biochemical onslaught of Covid-19. Haunting humanity are the effects of baby powder (Girion, 2018; Rabin, 2020), tainted baby foods (House, 2021), Agent Orange (Mitchell, 2014; VA, 2018), glyphosate (Samsel & Seneff, 2015; Giudice, 2019), dioxin, (Tomson, 2012), depleted uranium (Moszynski, 2003; Fairlie, 2009; Fathi et al., 2013; Bruess et al., 2020), weaponized syphilis (Chumley, 2019; Katz et al. 2007), weaponized insects (Swanson, 2015; Williams and Tucker, 2019; Datt, 1999; Immerwahr, 2020), weaponized mind-control (Project Artichoke, 1965) and, among many other threats,

industrial pollutants (Manisalidis et al., 2020; Markowitz, 2018). Contemporary nuclear medicine rests upon some of the most hideous military experiments on human beings ever conceived (Pilger, 2016; Naito, 2020).

USAF, Public Domain: Operation Ranch Hand and application of highly toxic Agent Orange during the Vietnam War

The countless chemical, biological, and radiological attacks on the natural world — the environment, humans, and animals — have necessitated tight control and manipulation of information and open access to it.

As regards the Covid-19 narrative, Damien Downing, President of the British Society of Environmental Medicine, observed that "Governments like epidemics just the same as they like war …. It's a chance to impose their will on us and get us all scared so that we huddle together and do what we're told" (Downing, 2009, cited in Kennedy Jr., 2021). Holocaust survivor Vera Sharav observes that, "For autocrats and others, Coronavirus is a chance to grab even more power" (2020). This suggests that there is some understanding in centers of elite global power that accepts as natural a permanent state of antagonism or, as Staub notes, "hostility", between rulers and the ruled when manipulation, coercion, and force are needed to enact controversial policies. As recipients of government grants, medical ethicists in academia today have even suggested that a "morality pill" could be made compulsory or be administered secretly, perhaps in the water supply as a "moral enhancement" for those who resist "following public guidelines" (Crutchfield, 2020). Professor Crutchfield's suggestion has not

escaped the notice of critics who see his inspiration borrowed from the IG Farben experiments conducted during WWII on "human guinea pigs" (Bernstein 1945, p. 7).

Doctor drawing blood from a patient as part of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, Public Domain

History testifies to the patterns of depravity in official programs of social and reproductive control, which have long been used to "gradually reduce" populations. Though it isn't necessary to reassess the well-known CDC germ warfare agenda enacted against American citizens during the decades-long Tuskegee Study (1932-72), the mass experiment is an important starting point from which to cite equally depraved but scarcely known clandestine programs conducted on unwitting citizens in the interest of curbing populations. During both world wars, funding for the United States' biological weapons program increased and continued into the Cold War and well beyond. News broke in the late 1970s that the Pentagon disclosed in declassified documents that from 1949 to 1969 it had conducted 239 secret open-air germ warfare experiments on an unsuspecting public (Wilson, 1977).

In 1950, a secret exercise codenamed Operation Sea Spray commenced to test the vulnerability of domestic population centers to a possible foreign biological weapons attack (irony unintended). The U.S. Navy sprayed *Serratia marcescens*, bacterial microbes, along the coast in San Francisco sending some members of the population to the hospital and one to an early grave (Bentley, 2019). Not to be outdone by the Navy, the U.S. Army "tested 'germ warfare' on the New York City subway by smashing lightbulbs full of bacteria" (Loria, 2015). It had also "conducted secret chemical testing

in [an] impoverished St. Louis neighborhood at the height of the Cold War" (CBS, 2012). Officials admitted that the tests "were part of a biological weapons program and St. Louis was chosen because it bore some resemblance to Russian cities that the U.S. might attack. The material being sprayed was zinc cadmium sulfide, a fine fluorescent powder" (CBS, 2012).

NYC Subway 7th Avenue line, a site of germ warfare experimentation on citizens in the 1960s. B&W version of '7 Av station platform track view' by John Seb Barber, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

As Antony Barnett noted, testing is also an international phenomenon that, from 1940 to 1979, involved "releasing potentially dangerous chemicals and micro-organisms over vast swaths of the [British] population without the public being told" (2002). Barnett refers to "The Sabotage Trials" conducted between 1952 and 1964, to determine the vulnerability of large government buildings and public transport to attack. In 1956, bacteria were released on the London Underground at lunchtime along the Northern Line between Colliers Wood and Tooting Broadway. It is no wonder people connect these past experiments with the present EUA experiment enacted globally on largely unwitting populations.

Totalitarianism, Criminality, and Undermining the Rule of Law

In his book about the psychology of totalitarianism, Desmet has remarkably little to say about the criminal mindset of totalitarian regimes. "When totalitarians seize power," explains Meerloo (1956, p. 148), "they commit crimes on far greater scales than any petty criminal, and they no doubt also feel the rush of illicit power as they commit, not just crimes, but crimes against humanity itself." The injection of over 5.45 billion people (as of 21 November 2022) with substances now known to contain a devil's brew of undisclosed ingredients constitutes a clear violation of the Nuremberg Code and a global crime against humanity (Hughes 2022c). What kind of psychology is needed to commit such a crime? There is an urgent need here to address issues of sociopathy and psychopathy, yet Desmet deems the idea that totalitarian leaders have a "psychopathic or perverted personality" to be a "misconception" and claims that in the Nazi regime such personality types were "systematically excluded from recruitment" (2022, p. 106).

Equally, what does it take for a heavily propagandized population to allow its leadership to commit crimes against humanity? According to Steven Bartlett, "*Nothing needs to happen* in order for psychologically normal, average, everyday people to accept and comply with a callous and cruel government intent upon a program of systematic dehumanization and murder […]" (2005, p. 185). If true, totalitarian societies, run by psychopaths, criminals, and mass murderers, with the passive acquiescence of the indoctrinated masses, are inherently pathological. Finding a cure for that pathology should be the primary aim of any book about the psychology of totalitarianism, yet in Desmet's book such problems simply do not arise.

At the heart of civilization is the rule of law — under which we are all equally accountable for our actions. If those who govern us are free to break the law and commit atrocities with impunity, there is no rule of law: we are looking at a society that can only be ruled by force. By using his theory of Mass Formation to exonerate the ruling class of its responsibility for committing crimes against humanity, Desmet is effectively condoning lawlessness and the controlled demolition of civilized society.

Lawlessness has been germinating in the United States ever since the birth of the national security state in 1947, with its founding myth of "national security" enabling the intelligence agencies to operate outside of any meaningful democratic oversight. The CIA, in Doug Valentine's (2017) assessment, represents "a criminal conspiracy on behalf of wealthy capitalists," "the organized crime branch of the US government," and "a criminal organization that is corrupting governments and societies around the world. It's murdering civilians who haven't done anything wrong" (2017, pp. 31, 35, 39). The ties between the CIA, the mafia, and transnational drug trafficking are well known (Scott 2004; Marshall 2018). The "criminal political violence necessary to sustain and expand [capitalist] accumulation," notes Ahmed, requires that capitalists:

> … continuously conceal that violence from public awareness or rehabilitate its legitimacy by the construction of new narratives of crisis/threat which can justify the use of exceptional violence as a matter of survival – or even normalize the repeated use of exceptional violence until its institutionalization permits it to become part of the everyday practice of politics. (2012, 63)

The history of US foreign policy since the birth of the CIA has been a tale of near continuous violations of international law and war crimes (Hughes 2022a), operating under cover of propaganda and psychological warfare in the name of "national security" and a range of exceptionalist myths (Blum 2006; Chomsky 2007; Hughes 2015).

Eye watering amounts of money have been funneled from US federal budgets into black budgets that the public is not allowed to know about. For example, an estimated US$21 trillion cannot be accounted for in the financial records of the Department of Defense and the Department of Housing and Urban Development between 1998 and 2016 (Skidmore & Fitts, 2019). The Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB), which sets the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for the US federal government, introduced Standard 56 on 4 October 2018, allowing national security concerns to override the need for public financial transparency. FASAB-56, according to Fitts and Betts (2021), "permits the federal government by administrative action—without formal legislative, regulatory, judicial, or executive approval—to keep secret books as determined by a secret group of people pursuant to a secret process." In other words, it provides for the clandestine pillaging of public wealth. The US government, in Fitts and Betts' (2021) opinion, is "operating sufficiently outside the Constitution and financial management and other laws to be called a 'criminal enterprise.'"

Wall Street remains above the law. As John Titus (2021) notes, five years after the 2007/8 financial crisis, "it was a matter of record that crimes on Wall Street weren't even being investigated, much less prosecuted." In 2012, HSBC Bank was fined $1.92 billion by the Department of Justice for laundering drug money, yet was allowed to enter into a "deferred prosecution agreement" under which its officers were relieved of criminal liability for their crimes. This is just one illustration of how the

> … large banks are above the law. They are free to engage in criminality using their privileged status as owners of central banks in control of monetary policy and as the federal government's bankers (and bankrupters), so long as they kick back a portion of the profits to the DOJ and U.S. enforcement agencies—and, no doubt, to legislators and politicians in the form of campaign contributions. (Fitts and Betts 2021)

The "criminal immunity enjoyed by banks," for Titus (2021), proves that the United States is no longer a constitutional republic under the rule of law.

The slide towards lawlessness has also been evident in Britain. In September 2019, the UK Supreme Court ruled that the Government's decision to prorogue Parliament for five

weeks in order to avoid parliamentary scrutiny of its negotiations with the EU was unlawful. Lord Sumption (2020), who sat on the Supreme Court until 2018, interprets the UK Coronavirus Act (March 2020) as enabling "government by decree," contradicting centuries of British constitutional tradition (2020, 9). In 2021, the Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Act was passed, which provides for "the authorisation of criminal conduct in the course of, or otherwise in connection with, the conduct of covert human intelligence sources."

It permits criminal acts by the following agencies of the state: any police force, the National Crime Agency, the Serious Fraud Office, any of the intelligence services, any of Her Majesty's forces, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Competition and Markets Authority, the Environment Agency, the Financial Conduct Authority, the Food Standards Agency, and the Gambling Commission. In other words, the British state can now commit criminal acts with impunity, provided it does so in the name of covert human intelligence gathering, which by definition is beyond public scrutiny. Meanwhile, the population at large is expected to obey the law and pay its taxes. In April 2022, Boris Johnson, a compulsive rule breaker, became the first sitting British Prime Minister in history to be found guilty of breaking the law (holding parties during the first "lockdown"), a clear signal of the ruling class' disregard for the rule of law which it has long claimed to uphold.

Criminality also courses through everything Covid-related. From a medical perspective, this should come as no surprise, given Gøtzsche's warning in *Deadly Medicines and Organized Crime: How Big Pharma Has Corrupted Healthcare* (2013) that Big Pharma is a worldwide criminal enterprise that is willing to kill and keep people sick for profit. The undisclosed ingredients in the Covid-19 injections (Hughes 2022c) imply universal lack of informed consent and thus, where injury or death has resulted, the legal implications are battery/assault, grievous bodily harm, and murder. Attempts to coerce populations to take those injections for the "safety" of everyone resemble a mafia protection racket: let us "protect" you and we will leave you alone. Criminal acts "dangerous to human life" that appear intended to: "(i) intimidate or coerce a civilian population [and/or] (ii) influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion" meet the definition of domestic terrorism under Section 802(5)(B) of the USA PATRIOT Act. On this basis, Martin (2021, 10) accuses Anthony Fauci of domestic terrorism, and he also accuses Fauci, Ralph Baric, Peter Daszak, Moderna, the CDC, NIAID, and other actors of "lying to Congress," "funding and conspiring to commit acts of terror," "conspiring to criminal commercial activity," "market manipulation and allocation," "interlocking directorates," and "illegal clinical trials." The head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stands accused of terrorism, political violence and genocide (Depuydt, 2020). The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention prohibits bioengineering pathogens to create biological weapons, yet still the practice continues (Samore, 2021), and there is speculation that SARS-CoV-2 was engineered in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

In sum, the rule of law is being deliberately undermined, and with it civilized society. This is the path to totalitarianism, yet Desmet seems oblivious to it.

Conclusion

The Psychology of Totalitarianism works to normalize key aspects of totalitarianism. Desmet announces early on that totalitarianism represents "the defining feature of the Enlightenment tradition" (p. 7). Not liberation from the Divine Right of Kings. Not the birth of modern republicanism. Not the spirit of free and independent scientific inquiry. But totalitarianism, a politically and intellectually backwards phenomenon that did not emerge until the 1930s, as per Arendt (2004), upon whom Desmet (2022) draws.

Significantly, Desmet reads history backwards to make the technocratic totalitarianism currently seeking to install itself seem inevitable. The latter is rooted in what Desmet calls "the mechanistic ideology," which he traces back to Enlightenment positivism and the glorification of Reason as the means to a utopian future (pp. 46, 175). All societies, he argues, are at risk of succumbing to that ideology, for "There is an ever-present, totalitarian undercurrent that consists of a fanatical attempt to steer and control life in far-reaching ways on the basis of technical, scientific knowledge" (p. 176). The "mechanistic ideology" — and not a vampiric transnational ruling class apparently waging undeclared covert war against the people — is the enemy for Desmet. Blaming the ideology is the rhetorical move that divorces the responsibility of bad actors from their bad intent.

Even though 76 percent of the world's wealth is controlled by only 10 percent of the global population, with the poorest half of humanity owning only two percent of the wealth (Chancel et al. 2022, 10), a worldwide revolution in which 90 percent of the human race asserts its claim to a just world against the other 10 percent is inconceivable to Desmet. Seeing an "evil elite" as "the one and only cause of the misery," he claims, leads to the "inevitable conclusion" that

> … this elite must be destroyed through a violent revolution. Such a revolution, however, would most probably lead to the radical destruction of the 'freedom movement' itself. It would, indeed, rather be a Godsent gift for the elite, as it justifies destruction of the opposition through harsh repression.

It is entirely unclear why violence is the "inevitable" outcome of a line of reasoning that pins blame for Covid mass atrocity, not on the victimized and abused masses, but rather on a proportionately tiny ruling class responsible for worldwide crimes against humanity. The numerical odds are overwhelmingly in favor of humanity. Violence is not a prerequisite for emancipation: it simply takes a critical mass to see what is happening and to refuse to comply with its own enslavement. Note Desmet's claim that "harsh repression" and "destruction of the opposition" by the "elite" is "justifie[d]" in case of insurrection. This sounds fascistic on its face. Extreme violence is permitted to the ruling class to defend itself, but Heaven forbid that the people, repeatedly subjected to the devices of mass atrocity, should entertain similar ideas about their own self-defense.

The quasi-mystical solutions proposed in the final part of *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, titled "Beyond the Mechanistic Worldview," reflect the book's detachment from actually existing (i.e. empirical, as opposed to media-induced) sociopolitical realities. In three chapters titled "The Dead versus the Living Universe," "Matter and Spirit," and "Science and Truth," Desmet offers some philosophical reflections on how to overcome scientism. But, as Marx (1969) famously writes, "Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it."

Solutions to totalitarianism do not lie in the philosophy of science. They lie in the outcome of class conflict. Desmet himself recognizes that, should leaders not be able to sustain the levels of manufactured "anxiety and aggression" necessary for Mass Formation, "the masses will wake up and become aware of the damage they have suffered, whereupon they will turn against the leaders in lethal fashion" (p. 116). Predictably, however, he leaps to the defense of the system:

> The problem cannot be solved by the violent elimination of an evil elite. The essence of the problem of totalitarianism lies in enormous mass dynamics. This means the elimination of totalitarian leaders will be to no avail; they are utterly replaceable (p. 139).

This is true if the predatory practices of the present capitalist system remain intact. But given the world-historical events that have unfolded since 2020, this is far from certain. The ruling class appears intent on replacing present forms of capitalism with technocracy — a system of direct bio-digital enslavement that does not rely on secondary forms of control such as debt slavery (Broudy & Arakaki, 2020; Fitts, 2022). In the opposite corner, a rapidly awakening global population will surely have other ideas.

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